

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL TANGIER

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3375

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANGIER 0156

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EIND OAU MO

SUBJECT: INDUSTRIAL REPRESENTATION/NEW OAU ORGANIZATION

REF: TANGIER 0148

1. CONSULATE OFFICER CALLED ON THE FORMER DELEGATE TO THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, MOHAMED AHMED ALOUI, TO DISCUSS THE GOM'S JUSTIFICATION FOR DOWNGRADING INDUSTRIAL REPRESENTATION AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL (SEE REFTEL). CONSULATE OFFICER NOTED THAT MINISTERIAL DELEGATES OF INDUSTRY APPEARED TO BE THE ONLY GROUP AFFECTED AS REPRESENTATIVES OF AGRICULTURE, TOURISM, AND LABOR WERE STILL FUNCTIONING AT THE DELEGATE LEVEL. ALOUI CONFIRMED THAT SUCH HAD BEEN THE CASE SINCE SEPTEMBER 1974 WHEN ALL INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING HAD BEEN CENTRALIZED IN THE MINISTRY AT RABAT. ALOUI STATED THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO SPEAK FOR OTHER PROVINCES BUT THAT, UNTIL CENTRALIZATION, TANGIER IN HIS VIEW HAD BEEN RELATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

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SUCCESSFUL IN PROMOTING INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOP-

MENT WITHIN THE PROVINCE. APPARENTLY THE GOM VIEWED CENTRALIZATION AS THE BEST AVAILABLE MEANS TO EXPLOIT POTENTIAL FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE WITH NO PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON ANY ONE PROVINCE. EVEN POTENTIAL INVESTORS IN TANGIER'S INDUSTRIAL ZONE MUST FIRST ACQUIRE RABAT'S APPROVAL FOR THEIR PROJECTS. (DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INDUSTRIAL ZONE TOLD CONSULATE OFFICER IN EARLIER CONVERSATION THAT SUCH APPROVALS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A DETERMINATION AS TO PREFERRED-LOCATION OF THE ENTERPRISE DEPENDING ON THE COUNTRY'S NEEDS; THUS, ANY GIVEN PROJECT MAY BE APPROVED WITH THE STIPULATION THAT IT LOCATE AT OTHER THAN ITS ORIGINALLY PROJECTED SITE.)

2. ALOUI STATED THAT HE NO LONGER OFFICIALLY REPRESENTED THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND HAD RECENTLY BEEN APPOINTED ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ASSOCIATIONS DES ORGANISATIONS AFRICAINES DE PROMOTION COMMERCIALE (OPC). ALOUI RELATED THAT THE OPC WAS AN INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION CREATED BY THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY IN MARCH OF 1975. ALTHOUGH THE ORGANIZATION IS STILL IN ITS INFANCY, THERE ARE ALREADY 34 MEMBER AFRICAN STATES (HE LATER SAID 30). TEN STATES, INCLUDING MOROCCO, WILL HOST REGIONAL OPC OFFICES WHILE ADDIS ABABA WILL SERVE AS THE ORGANIZATION'S HEAD-QUARTERS. ALOUI STRESSED THAT HE WAS ONLY ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL AND THAT A PERMANENT ONE WOULD BE ELECTED AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OAU. ACCORDING TO ALOUI, THE SECRETARY GENERALSHIP CANNOT BE HELD BY ANYONE FROM THE TEN STATES HOSTING REGIONAL OFFICES OR BY THE STATE HEAD-QUARTERING THE ORGANIZATION. THUS, ALOUI IS EXCLUDED BY THE OPC "CONSTITUTION" FROM ACQUIRING PERMANENT STATUS AS SECRETARY GENERAL. THE PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION IS TO PROMOTE TRADE AMONG THE PARTICIPATING STATES, TO REDUCE TARIFF AND CUSTOMS DUTIES ON SPECIFIED ITEMS, AND TO ASSIST THE MORE UNDERDEVELOPED STATES IN REALIZING THEIR FULL COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL BY INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES OF EXPERTISE.

3. COMMENTS. THE POTENTIAL IMPORTANCE OF THE OPC IS PER SE SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO ACCESS. OBVIOUSLY, ITS IMMEDIATE POTENTIAL FOR BECOMING AN IMPORTANT ECONOMIC FORCE ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERNATIONAL LEVEL IS CERTAINLY LACKING. ALOUI READILY ADMITS THAT IT WAS NEVER DESIGNED FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN PROMOTING TRADE AMONG THE PARTICIPATING STATES. ALOUI STRESSED THAT THE OPC WAS STILL IN THE INITIAL ORGANIZATIONAL STAGES AND THAT PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY WAS NOT YET UNDERWAY. THERE IS NO PRINTED MATTER AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION TO INTERESTED PARTIES. THE PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION, BRIEFLY OUTLINED ABOVE, WAS RAPIDLY READ TO THE REPORTING

OFFICER FROM ALOUT'S WORKING PAPERS.

4. THE DOWNGRADING OF INDUSTRIAL REPRESENTATION AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL APPARENTLY REFLECTS RABAT'S DESIRE TO ENSURE COMPLETE CONTROL OVER INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING. THE REPORTING OFFICER WAS LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT APPROVALS FOR INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS ORIGINATING IN THE NORTH ARE SOMETIMES ACCOMPANIED BY PREFERRED-LOCATIONS SOMEWHAT FARTHER SOUTH THAN TANGIER. EASTMAN

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